

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Date Issued: 7/2/2012

2012 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 27

Summer Update # 4, Districts 1-6

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Assessment Projects

Dall Point Test Fishery- 5.5-inch drift net project/YDFDA, ADF&G
The cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE through July 1 is 1,101.10.

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)- 8.5-inch set net project/ADF&G, YDFDA
The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE through July 1 is 3.40, which is below the average of 19.17 for this date. It is also below the average of 16.49 for historical late years for this date.

Additionally, test fishing for Chinook salmon with 8.25-inch drift gillnet gear is being conducted at the Big Eddy location. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE through July 1 is 299.01.

Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery- 5.5-inch drift net project/ADFG, YDFDA
The cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE through July 1 is 7,832.05 which is well above the historical median of 3,421.07 for this date.

Mountain Village Chinook Drift Test Fishery- 7.5-inch mesh drift net project/YDFDA, ATC, ADFG

The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE through July 1 is 1,264.89 which is above the (2010-2011) average of 955.32.

Andreafsky River weir/USFWS

The Andreafsky River weir was fish tight on June 29. The cumulative counts through July 1 are 16 Chinook and 4,471 summer chum salmon.

Pilot Station sonar project/ADFG

Chinook salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be approximately 76,000 through July 1, which is below the average of 119,000 for this date. It is also below the average of 101,000 for historical late years for this date. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be approximately 1,361,500 which is above the historical median of 956,200 for this date.

Anvik River sonar project/ADFG

The summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be approximately 51,300 through July 1, which is near the historical median of 56,000 for this date.

Gisasa River weir/USFWS

The cumulative counts through July 1 are 0 Chinook and 1,508 summer chum salmon count through July 1.

Henshaw Creek Weir/TCC

The Henshaw Creek weir was fully operational on June 25. As of July 1, no salmon have been recorded.

Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel/Zuray

The cumulative expanded counts through July 1 are 41 Chinook and 2 summer chum salmon.

NOTE: Other assessment projects will be added as they become operational.

Age Composition

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.5-inch LYTF set nets through June 30 was 1% age-4, 24% age-5, 72% age-6, and 3% age-7 fish. Age-5 fish were slightly below average for this date and age-6 fish were above average. Females were 59%, above average. The sample size was 386 fish.

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.25-inch Big Eddy drift test fishery through June 30 was 2% age-4, 32% age-5, 63% age-6, and 2% age-7 fish. Females were 61%. The sample size was 197 fish.

The Chinook salmon age composition from the subsistence harvest collected by fishermen contracted by the Association of Village Council Presidents through June 19 in Districts 1 and 2 was 3% age-4, 54% age-5, 41% age-6, and 2% age-7 fish. Females were 28%. The sample size was 339 fish.

The chum salmon age composition from the 5.5-inch LYTF drift nets through July 1 was 59% age-4, 35% age-5, and 6% age-6 fish. The sample size was 717 fish. Age-4 fish were one and one-half times the average for this date and age-5 fish were two-thirds average. Females were 53%, slightly below average.

Assessment

Chinook salmon run timing is tracking considerably below historical averages, similar to trends observed in Chinook salmon runs throughout the state of Alaska in 2012. The Pilot Station sonar

cumulative passage estimate of approximately 76,000 Chinook salmon through July 1 is well below the historical average of 119,000 through this date, and is also below the average passage estimates at this point for late run years, of approximately 101,000. The historical average median of the run at LYTF for late run years is June 25 and at Pilot Station sonar for late run years is June 27. Current data suggest the 2012 preliminary median at LYTF and Pilot Station sonar was approximately June 26 and June 28, respectively. The historical third quartile of the run at Pilot Station for late run years is July 1. Based on historical late year run timing and current data, the 2012 Chinook salmon run size is coming in at the lower end of the preseason outlook estimate of 109,000, or potentially lower.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the first pulse of Chinook salmon past LYTF (June 11-25) and Pilot Station sonar (June 10-25) revealed that 45% were Canadian-origin Chinook salmon. The department is currently analyzing the second pulse of Chinook salmon that passed Pilot Station sonar June 26 – June 30.

Summer chum salmon passage through July 1 at Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be approximately 1.36 million, which is above the historical median of 950,000 for this date. The historical median of the summer chum run at Pilot Station is June 27. Current data suggest the summer chum run is between the median and third quartile point. Based on historical run timing, the summer chum run is on track with the preseason outlook estimate of 1.5-2.0 million.

Current Management

Consistent with preseason management strategies, subsistence fishing periods have already been cancelled in lower river districts to protect the first and second pulses of Chinook salmon and similar actions are being implemented in upriver fishing districts based on migratory timing of Chinook salmon. Based on the assessment information to date, the Chinook salmon run is poor, and additional measures are being taken to conserve Chinook salmon for escapement. Gear restrictions have also been implemented in the Coastal District and Districts 1-4 in an effort to conserve Chinook salmon and allow subsistence fishermen the opportunity to target summer chum salmon.

The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: In the northern portion of the Coastal District from 62 degrees North latitude to Point Romanof, subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. The department will notify fishermen by July 3, concerning subsistence salmon fishing opportunity in the northern portion of the Coastal District.

In southern portion of the Coastal District, from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62° North latitude, the subsistence salmon fishing schedule is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day. Gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh in this portion of the Coastal District.

District 1: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 1 is closed. The department will notify fishermen by July 3 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for District 1.

District 2: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 2 is closed. District 2 will reopen at 8:00 p.m. Monday, July 2. This will be a 12-hour subsistence salmon fishing period, from 8:00 p.m. Monday, July 2, until 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, July 3. Gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size. The department will notify fishermen by July 3 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for District 2.

District 3: A second subsistence salmon fishing period is being cancelled in District 3. District 3 is currently closed and will remain closed during the subsistence salmon fishing period which was scheduled to begin 8:00 p.m. Sunday, July 1. The department will notify fishermen by July 3 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for District 3.

Subdistrict 4-A-Lower (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Stink Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik and Grayling. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A-Lower is currently closed and will remain closed for the period that was scheduled from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 4, until 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 6, to conserve Chinook salmon. The department will notify fishermen by July 6 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for this lower portion of Subdistrict 4-A.

Subdistrict 4-A-Upper: (from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk. To conserve Chinook salmon, subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A-Upper will close at 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 2, and will remain closed for the period that was scheduled from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 4, until 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 6. The department will notify fishermen by July 6 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for this upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A.

Subdistricts 4-B&C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby. Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C are currently on their regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule which consists of two 48-hour periods each week from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays and from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays. To conserve Chinook salmon, subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C will close at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 3, and will remain closed for the period that was scheduled from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 4, until 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 6. The department will notify fishermen by July 6 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C.

Subdistricts 5-A,B&C: The regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule in Subdistricts 5-A,B&C consist of two 48-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Thursdays, and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays.

Fishermen in Districts 1-4, and Subdistricts 5-A,B&C should stand by for short notice news releases regarding changes to subsistence salmon fishing schedules and gear restrictions.

Subdistrict 5-D: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day.

District 6: The subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 42-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays.

The Old Minto Area: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays.

At this time, in Districts 5 and 6, fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day. Gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon.

The Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day. Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 3, gillnets will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Commercial Fishing

Based on the current abundance of summer chum salmon, commercial salmon fishing periods have been scheduled in Districts 1, 2, and Subdistrict 4-A.

In Districts 1 and 2, the areas open to commercial fishing have been limited to only portions of these districts in which the incidental harvest rate of Chinook salmon is anticipated to be low. The sale of Chinook salmon has been prohibited in these districts.

Preliminary harvest information for District 1

Period #1 (South Mouth Only): 4 hours; June 29, 8:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight, restricted to 6 inch maximum mesh size.

(16,081 summer chum/ 102,919 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.)

289 Chinook salmon caught but not sold.

Period #2 (South Mouth Only): 4 hours; July 1, 8:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight, restricted to 6 inch maximum mesh size.

(13,512 summer chum/ 84,854 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.)

108 Chinook salmon caught but not sold.

Period #3 (South Mouth Only): 6 hours; July 2, 6:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight, restricted to 6 inch maximum mesh size.

The preliminary commercial harvest for District 1 to date is 29,593 summer chum salmon, and 397 Chinook salmon have been reported as caught but not sold.

Preliminary harvest information for District 2

Period #1 ((Downstream of Andreafsky River Mouth): 4 hours; July 2, 8:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight, restricted to 6 inch maximum mesh size.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistrict 4-A

Three 12-hour commercial fishing periods have been announced. Commercial fishing gear is restricted to fish wheels only which must be manned at all times of operation. All Chinook salmon caught in the fish wheels must be immediately returned to the water alive.

Period #1: 8:00 p.m. Sunday, July 1 until 8:00 a.m. Monday, July 2
No commercial harvest has occurred.

Period #2: 8:00 p.m. Monday, July 2 until 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, July 3

Period #3: 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 3 until 8:00 a.m. Wednesday, July 4

Recorded fishery announcements and updates will be available 24 hours a day at 949-1731 or 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Emmonak ADF&G office at 949-1320. The Emmonak ADF&G office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.